

Oral History Interview

with

BILL BRAMSCHREIBER

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By Michael R. Adamson

Adamson: You're one of many Purdue graduates hired by Pankow. I've gone to Purdue and interviewed some of the people there, but I'd like you to tell me in your own words what you think makes the Purdue programs in civil engineering and construction management so strong.

Bramschreiber: Okay. Well, first, I was at the topnotch engineering school for pretty much all disciplines. So when I went there, I didn't know which one I wanted to be in. I decided on construction. I think the faculty is first-rate. A lot of the guys in construction, especially, they have long-term experience in the industry, so it's not just from a book; it's hands-on. They've done it all, and that's better than a book. They have slides and photos of what they did so you can really get an appreciation for that. They have excellent labs, a lot of the material science, hydraulics, soils—just incredible labs, hands-on stuff, survey and stuff. That would be the two main things. It's got a great reputation, too, for civil engineering construction.

Adamson: I suppose I should back up. Are you from Indiana or that area?

Bramschreiber: I'm from Chicago, actually. It's like two hours away. It's actually closer, University of Illinois to my house. Less than two hours, depending on how you drive, but yeah. So it was close by, yeah.

I started in '77 and graduated in '81, and it was six hundred bucks for in-state tuition for a semester and nine hundred bucks for out of state. So it was super affordable. It's a good school. I had a great time there.

Adamson: When it came time to work or interview for a job, how did you come to be recruited by and choose to work at Pankow?

Bramschreiber: While I was there, I was in, like, the second class of the construction engineering management program, so every summer you had to work like twelve weeks, and I worked for Public Service Indiana, which was a big public utility company for Indiana, and I saw there just corporate bureaucracy and it took so much effort to do anything. People I saw there, I could tell they were frustrated, and the ones that got higher up, it was just a nine-to-five thing, put your time in and that's it. So I knew I didn't want to do anything like that.

Then when I was interviewing, I had a heavy base in construction, I thought I wanted to design structures, so I go to these places like Sargent & Lundy and Bechtel and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in Chicago. They'd recruit you and you go into these high-rise buildings, and it'd be like six floors in a row, just all these cubicles. If you worked there for ten years, you'd get a corner cubicle. That just seemed so depressing to me. So I started thinking construction would be a good thing to go into.

So when I told this guy, Donn Hancher, he was head of the construction engineering program, that I wanted to work for a construction company, he recommended Pankow. Dean Stephan and Charlie had a good rapport with Donn Hancher and the other professors, and they steered the top students to make sure they interviewed with Pankow. So we did that.

Adamson: Who actually interviewed you?

Bramschreiber: Two guys came out, Bill Heine, he was in charge of the Hawaii operation, and Dean Stephan. So they both talked to you at the same time. It was more than an interview; they were trying to sell you the company. They'd already seen your grades and they'd talked to the professors and they knew you were a good candidate, so they were just trying to get you to commit.

Adamson: At any point in the interviewing process did you meet Charlie Pankow or was that later?

Bramschreiber: No, I met him when I took—it was after the on-campus interview that I came out to Pasadena for a week and Bob Law showed me around, and Tom Verti, then Dean Stephan a little bit, and then you had to go meet with Charlie for about half an hour. That was actually—that went bad. That could have been the only time I met Charlie, because I kind of blew it. I was too nervous and I didn't carry on a good conversation.

That year was kind of like times are now—1981, there weren't tons of job offers being made, so I was like in the second tier. They didn't tell me no, but I could tell when I checked back in that other people had to say no first. So I wrote Charlie a letter saying, "I want to work for you." Coincidentally I do this, like, senior research paper, and I did it on slipforming, which turned out to be—I didn't know it then, but Pankow was really into that. When I came out, I saw all that, so that was impressive. So then I kind of waited until I got a call, which I did, luckily.

Adamson: In that interviewing cycle?

Bramschreiber: Yes. I left there and then I called back in a couple weeks, asked Dean and he told me they couldn't offer me the job now, but if I waited, maybe. So I kept waiting. Meanwhile, I told Chevron I would take a job with them in San Francisco, and then when Pankow called back and people had dropped out, I reneged on Chevron and took the job with Pankow. It was a very good move. I've been here ever since.

Adamson: Did you get a sense at that point of where the company was going or where it had been? Obviously there was a recession, but they had been growing with an intent to grow? Was that part of the pitch, or what was really the attraction?

Bramschreiber: The attraction was they put you in the field; It was hands-on. Everybody became a field engineer first. You had to spend three, four years in the field, at least. That's what I wanted. I wanted that hands-on exposure to building something, which I

still like. I didn't have the impression that they wanted to be the biggest or the best—the best, yes, but not the biggest, it seemed like. They would take a certain number of jobs that they could do well with the people they had, not overextend themselves. I mean grow in a controlled manner, not just take everything they could. Whatever they took they would do right. So that appealed to me, also.

Adamson: I don't know how this translates into hiring people, but for that period of time, at least while you were in school, late seventies, early eighties, at least according to *ENR*, Pankow made a big jump in the amount of business or revenues or sales, however you want to measure what they were doing.

Bramschreiber: Yeah.

Adamson: So were you part of a wave of people, do you think, that were coming in at that time?

Bramschreiber: Yeah. That year they probably hired six people, probably. But I went to Hawaii first, right away. I think California was—they only had a couple of jobs here and they kind of had enough people. They hired maybe two over here. They sent like four to Hawaii. In Hawaii there was like four big condos going on and a shopping center, so it was kind of a boom period there that we helped out in.

Adamson: Before I step through some of these projects, I want to talk a little bit more about Purdue. Since so many people here, or at Pankow, are Purdue grads, just impressionistically, what do you think hiring all these Purdue people, what impact does that have on what kind of company Pankow is, as opposed to hiring a few people here, a few people like from many schools?

Bramschreiber: Like when I started, there were two main schools they were hiring from, Oregon State and Purdue. I think that was because those were the only two schools that had, like, a construction engineering and management program. A lot of schools, like construction management was more like a technology thing. It wasn't heavy in the math and the science; it was more just the management side. So, one, Purdue had that program, and, of course, Charlie went to Purdue.

Adamson: Do you think it helped getting things done that you all went to the same place? Are you all on the same page or do you think maybe that's a downfall, as well?

Bramschreiber: I think it's good and bad, I think. Across the board, the people that came from Purdue that I worked with, they're a lot alike. They're hardworking, smart, kind of Midwestern sensibility, kind of values like that. In the eighties, I don't know, that seemed okay, but to me we had trouble after that, you know, the nineties and later, getting as many people from Purdue to come out here, actually, it seemed like. Cost of living was too much of a shock, cost of living, away from your family.

Adamson: So there's more diversity?

Bramschreiber: Yes, now there is. Now they've hired more from California, a lot from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. I worked with numerous people from there. That's a very good school. So they're hiring the right people, which we've gotten back to being good at. It was a while like in the late nineties we were overextended, I thought, and we hired people we wouldn't normally hire.

Adamson: A couple more broad questions before we get into some project-specific ones. Bob Law comes to mind as the sort of gold standard on this, but have you been involved in the programs at Purdue?

Bramschreiber: Since I graduated?

Adamson: Since you graduated?

Bramschreiber: No, not really. I contribute some money, but that's about it.

Adamson: So you don't go back and that sort of thing?

Bramschreiber: Not recently. In the eighties I went back a couple times.

Adamson: To give talks?

Bramschreiber: No, no, just to visit people, visit professors and that kind of stuff, but not participate. Yes, Bob Law does that, and J. J. Mollenkopf, he does that, too. Have you met him?

Adamson: Just briefly. He was the one who sent me the list of all the Purdue people.

Bramschreiber: He would know.

Adamson: A question about Charlie Pankow. Once you started working at Pankow, how often did you interact with him, and then what would you say, if any, impact he had directly on your career at Pankow?

Bramschreiber: Well, it would kind of depend what job I was on and where I was, as far as the interaction. The first four years I was in Hawaii and I probably saw him rarely. Then I went to San Francisco, and he had a home up there. He visited the two jobs there quite a bit. The first was a parking structure and then we did Hotel Sofitel [in Redwood City], where he was actually part owner, part developer of the hotel. So I saw him all the time there.

Then later on I worked in the Altadena office for a year and then I saw him all the time there. Then I did Arcadia Methodist Hospital. He was on the board there, a big contributor there, so he was very involved in that one too. Hotel Sofitel, he would come

by fairly regularly, maybe once every couple of months. I was project engineer, so I gave him the tours.

He's actually the first person to truly impress upon me the importance—and it was important to him personally—about workers' safety, because we'd walk around and he would point out stuff. I remember the hotel, like the first suspended level is like twenty feet up in the air, and we just had these rickety ladders that went there. I took him up that and he said, "That's not the way to do it." So after that we built a big, massive gang ladder and it was a lot safer.

Adamson: What kind of ladder?

Bramschreiber: A gang ladder, a specially constructed ladder. It's like four feet wide with big timbers. It's well put together. It's all tied off. It's much safer. I mean, nowadays you would build a stair tower, but back then that was kind of the Cadillac. I remember he told me something like safety is good business, too, but it's important that we don't hurt anybody, that we treat people right and don't endanger them. That's back in like 1985 or probably '86. That impressed me a lot. We talk about safety, but to hear from it from the very top, and that it was personally important to him, that was important to me, too.

Hotel Sofitel is a French hotel, kind of upscale finishes, and when it was being finished, they had a series of French chefs, whatever, they were there, training to break in the kitchen and get all the food or whatever. He'd probably come by for a couple-month period, three-month period, probably, like three times a week and try out the food and

give his critique. So I saw that he had quite a—I don't know, he's been exposed to a lot, he knew a lot about gourmet cooking and stuff, the way he would talk to the chefs and stuff. So that was a different side of him than I saw, you know, just the construction guy. I remember that quite a bit. So, he impressed on me safety. That was a good thing.

Then ten years later I moved back from Hawaii and we were doing Arcadia Methodist Hospital, where he was on the board, so again, he would come by fairly often, because we'd never done a hospital, and the hospital itself was a little leery of giving it to a company that hadn't built hospitals. They think that they're so specialized that you need to only do that, which is not the case. It's just good construction is good construction, so we could do that. That time I was the guy in charge. I was the project superintendent. He taught me that, basically, don't embarrass him; that we needed to do a good job and I was the guy most responsible for making that happen.

Adamson: You were the superintendent?

Bramschreiber: Superintendent. I was the guy in the field basically in charge of everything. It came out good, so we backed him up.

Adamson: If we step away from Charlie for a second, then, you mentioned going to Hawaii, you mentioned why Pankow was attractive to start working for them, but talk about your career events within Pankow in terms of what you wanted to accomplish, if you had any long-term goals, and how Pankow helped you, trained you, and then if there's anyone specific at Pankow that mentored you, talk about that, too.

Bramschreiber: All right. My goal was to become a project superintendent. I may have sold myself short, but that's what I wanted to do. So I became that. So a field engineer, that took me about four years, and I was project engineer for probably three or four years. So I'm twenty-eight, twenty-nine when I got a chance to be the project superintendent, so that was a pretty fast pace to become a project superintendent. So I'm twenty-nine and I've been doing that since then, obviously bigger and bigger buildings. I tend to now get some of the harder, more complicated buildings. So I'm always challenged by it.

Adamson: So project superintendent is something you can not stay with the rest of your time?

Bramschreiber: I can. That's what I've been doing. Other people, they just want to do it once and they want to do something else. It's somewhat of a grind to being in the field because it's all the real world. I mean, if you're here estimating, management, it's all on paper. In the field, it's all got to come together, every detail has got to be figured out, it's all got to be figured out and put together and built, all the materials gotten there, everybody work together. Sometimes it's a frustrating place because you're not dealing with all "Einstein" people; you're dealing with various levels with different motives, and that way it's frustrating sometimes, but every day you're building something. So every day you can walk around and see what you've done. I like that part.

As far as people that mentored me, the first one was Red Metcalf. He was a superintendent in Hawaii. I learned a lot from him as far as scheduling and organization

of how to build a job at a fast pace. He was great at that. I learned a lot from him for sure. That was my first four years.

The next job I worked with Dick Walterhouse. He was a project superintendent and I was project engineer. It was a parking structure. So I learned from him. He's very meticulous, everything in its place, very organized. So I learned something from that.

Then I worked with Mike Liddiard on one job. He was more of a shoot-from-the-hip kind of guy, so I learned the good and bad about that. He kept things moving, he kept a lot of people fired up, but he would blow past things sometimes. I really shouldn't say that. So I saw the different types of superintendents and kind of developed my style from that.

Let's see. Tom Verti's made a big difference, too, in my career. I was in Hawaii doing decent-sized stuff, but he's the one who picked me to run the hospital in Arcadia. That was a kind of out-of-nowhere kind of thing. So it was a big vote of confidence that he gave me to do that.

Adamson: So you spent more or less a decade or so in Hawaii?

Bramschreiber: Yeah, twelve years in two different time periods. So '81 to '85 I was in Hawaii, then I went to the Bay Area from like '85 to '88. Then I came down here for about a year. I was putting together a job, this Tyler Mall expansion, super-complicated mall overbuild, where actually we built a story below the roof. So I helped develop all that, how does it come together. Then the job got sued by a competing developer on the EIR, so they had to redo the EIR and it was set back like a year or so.

So at that point I got a call from the guy in Hawaii, George Hutton, to become a superintendent over there. So I took that and I was back there for eight more years, Hawaii.

Adamson: So were those two boom periods in Hawaii?

Bramschreiber: Yeah. Yeah, totally.

Adamson: And then when it busted, you came here?

Bramschreiber: Yeah. That's the problem with the construction industry, if you want to buy a house. Of course, every property I've bought, you move there when it's blooming, so you pay high, and then you leave when it's the bust, so that the market's going down. So you kind of get messed up in the real estate.

Adamson: I hadn't thought of that. I'm going to ask you about your projects here in a second, but when you got to Hawaii, you mentioned Bill Heine and Kim Lum and Red Metcalf. Of course, Al [Fink] and George were there.

Bramschreiber: Right.

Adamson: In those two periods of time, the Hawaii office, was it growing? Were there more people coming on? Just talk about how it operated and then maybe compare how it operated there compared to the mainland.

Bramschreiber: In '81 it was kind of just peaking, so '81, '82, we were probably getting a little bigger, but then the jobs were finishing. It was like five jobs were down to one job, the Executive Centre, where I was working. So it was kind of going down, but Hawaii, though, that was a real good time. There was a lot of young people from the mainland, and it was a small area, so we did a lot of stuff together. We played on softball teams and basketball teams and we kind of hung out quite a bit. So that part was a good time.

The second time, I came back in like '88, that was more of a start of a boom, so we started the one job I was doing, Nuuanu Shopping Center, and then we got some big condos from that. So that time it really grew, the company, so we were hiring a lot of, some local people, but some more people from the mainland. So that was more of a growth that I was involved in, trying to train those people and get it to work out.

Adamson: The second time you came back, had Kim Lum and Bill Heine left?

Bramschreiber: Yeah.

Adamson: During that time you were gone?

Bramschreiber: Yes.

Adamson: Or had they left before that?

Bramschreiber: I left, well, the first time in '85.

Adamson: They were still there?

Bramschreiber: I'm trying to think. No, Bill Heine was definitely gone, because he pulled some of my friends to Texas. I think Kim left just after I left. Then Kim came back sometime in the nineties after working for Bill Heine.

Adamson: Because there's an article talking all about it, I'm just wondering, you know, your experience as a field engineer on this Executive Centre project and what you can tell me about innovation on the jobsite, which is a theme that Pankow people mention in various contexts, but I just want your take on it specific to this project.¹

Bramschreiber: My take is this was probably one of the best-run jobs and most profitable jobs that we ever did, because we had like three or four other condos that finished, and then we had a shopping center that finished. We had two superintendents. You had Red [Metcalf] and Al Fink. They're both kind of superintendents, so they were key there. Then you had kind of the best engineers coming off the other projects, so your staff was topnotch. But not only that, more importantly, was the actual workers were the best we

¹ "Forming Strategy Slips Job a Month Ahead of Schedule," *Engineering News-Record*, October 28, 1982.

had. We had guys that were foremen, they were being journeymen on this job because Hawaii was slowing down and it was only job possible.

The biggest innovation to me on this job was how fast we did it, how close we kept the finishes to the structure. It's something that's hard to duplicate nowadays, even, doing it. So, one, Hawaii had the advantage of there was really no inspection. It was like pretty much self-inspection. The Building Department didn't need to come out and see stuff. You didn't have like you do now, third-party inspectors, deputy inspectors that stayed there the whole time and checked everything. You were on your own to do it right, which Pankow always tries to do it right. That's one of the best things about the company. So you're not waiting for somebody to say, okay, you can pour this deck or you can close this wall, or you can do whatever. You can really manage the schedule.

So the innovation to me was how we finished this job so fast, because you could see the structures, the slipform, which is the walls, going up, and then two floors, flying forms, that's the decks being poured, and then below that there's like three floors of reef shoring. As soon as that's out of the way, we're putting in the windows, plastering the walls, building everything up. So it was really run like clockwork.

Adamson: [Pointing to photo in article] What's this sticking out here?

Bramschreiber: That was like a two-way thing. It's a protective canopy for safety that if anything fell off up high, it wouldn't fall down. Then the glass guys used this to put their connection on the top part. Then we moved that up with the cycle. It's a three-day cycle; every three days we'd pour a floor. One day you pour a floor, the next day the walls go

higher. Instead of being one floor above, they're two floors up. Then you fly the forms up, and two days later you pour the next deck. So the innovation was the coordination. It was a well-coordinated, well-built project.

Adamson: It comes down to the people who you get on the project? I mean, you can do the same technique with a different set of people and not get the same performance?

Bramschreiber: Right. Al Fink had a big part in the finished, getting that. Every floor, the next activity would happen. Whatever it was, it would just stack on top of each other. The right guys figuring out the details, the engineers were great on that job, figuring the details out and just really coordinating.

I'm not sure what the article says, if it talks about slipforming, but that was something we've been doing since I've been around. We had that perfected.

Adamson: It put emphasis on this three-day cycle. I don't know if you set any records on it or if that had become the norm.

Bramschreiber: That was the norm, a three-day cycle. It was a couple of years later there were two other jobs that had a smaller footprint, but it was just like a square, 72-by-72, and one job went like a two-and-a-half-day cycle the whole way up. Two days sometimes. Hobron at Waikiki, it was called. There was another job, Maile Sky Court, that they also went faster than three days sometimes, too. It depends on the shape of building how fast you can go, the size and the shape.

Adamson: You left in between these two periods, but when Hawaii had these booms and busts, when you had the bust, did people just go to the mainland or did they actually let people go? How did that work in Hawaii?

Bramschreiber: The engineers?

Adamson: The engineers, the Pankow people.

Bramschreiber: The professional staff, they sent most of them to the mainland. The first time there probably was nobody that they let go, I don't believe at that time. In fact, it's kind of a tradition that they didn't, really—they kind of rode out the booms and the busts; they didn't really lay off people. I think that was the case all the way up through, like, '93 or something. The bust in the early nineties, '92, '93, whatever, at that time they did lay off some people that were keepers normally.

Adamson: Busts generally affect everybody, so there's not like there's another company to go to in Hawaii. If people didn't leave because Pankow didn't have the work, they just got sent somewhere else? There was enough work in the organization? I guess it's a historical question.

Bramschreiber: In the eighties, yeah. Someplace always had some jobs. Normally L.A. has always been the best market, but it was slow. Hawaii was feast or famine. There'd

be too much work or not enough work. The Bay Area kind of had a consistent small amount of work, it seemed like.

Adamson: Most of the people I've interviewed have gone all over the place. Wherever the job was, you got sent to the job. Were there people who wanted to work in not just Hawaii, but more wedded to their location and left the company because they wanted to stay in the area and there wasn't work there for them?

Bramschreiber: Yes, there was a couple of people I remember that did that.

Adamson: Now I'm not going to go through every project individually. I looked at what you sent me and grouped some of these projects together by building type. I note that you worked on several shopping mall renovations. I counted at least four. I have a couple questions. One, did you end up specializing in this building type? And, two, if you did, if you can just generalize between all these, what were your contributions to these projects?

Bramschreiber: Any project?

Adamson: The malls, the shopping malls. If you did different things on different projects, you can—

Bramschreiber: Well, I wouldn't say I've specialized in the malls. I've done three of them. I've done both the hospitals. I've been on probably six high-rise condos, and then one hotel, and one kind of big parking structure, never any office buildings. The mall renovations take just a lot meticulous planning, because the ones we do, they're always open, so we've got to keep the stores intact. You can't have them lose business. We have to be reasonable about not blocking their entrances, not damaging their—if you're fixing the roof, not leaking, that we don't cause their merchandise to be damaged. It takes a lot of communication and coordination with each store. So each store you have to pretty much talk to every day if you're in their area and say, "Okay, here's what's happening," and how long it's going to take. So that's one of the more frustrating things. It's not my favorite thing.

Adamson: If you look at all of these, did Pankow, as a project team, approach these renovations in a similar manner or did each one of these malls call for specific designs or approaches that were unique to those malls?

Bramschreiber: Tyler Mall was a separate and unique case because it was something that hadn't been done, keep the roof on and build a level underneath it, and then take that roof off while the stores are right below you. I wasn't actually on it when it actually happened; I just helped to plan it and got it approved by OSHA and different stuff like that. So that was a unique thing. The rest of them, though, are similar quite a bit.

Adamson: Were there covers on Pearlridge and Ala Moana [malls]?

Bramschreiber: Ala Moana, yeah, there was a store at the ground level and then we took out the second level they had and added, redid that one, plus they had another one on top of that with the roof. But we took off the existing roof and just had to weatherproof for the stores below. Then Pearl was just totally cosmetic remodeling; we didn't really do any new structural stuff.

Adamson: I guess what struck me, maybe there were people in Pankow who, because of their expertise, became the mall experts and worked on mall renovations.

Bramschreiber: I would say no.

Adamson: Okay, fair enough. You said that the hospital projects, that was something that Pankow never had gotten involved in until relatively recently, and it's been explained to me that was just because of the way hospitals are built and how—I think someone, I forget who it was, mentioned it's sort of a unique type of building. You mentioned that from the other point of view, they were looking for somebody who knew how to build hospitals. What did that mean then?

Bramschreiber: That they've done it before. To me, okay, by the first fifteen years of my career or whatever—first of all the jobs you got were like repeat clients or specially negotiated with people that we trusted. A lot of those companies we done repeat a lot of business with, like Corporate Properties, did a lot of malls with them, and before that was

Winmar, did a lot of developments with them, and those companies kind of changed and no longer could you just single-source negotiate. So we had to expand what we went after.

Hospitals, they're always structural steel. They're governed by a state architectural agency called OSHPD [Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development], and they have their own inspectors, their own plan checkers, they give their own permits. Pretty much any hospital, except for something on a military base, they have total control over. They're very bureaucratic and very inefficient, very frustrating. So you hear the horror stories of how difficult they are to deal with, which it's kind of misleading. They're no worse than some of the worse building inspectors I've dealt with. Anyway, so there's that boogeyman everybody's scared of. Hospital owners, you're probably kind of scared of, too, before you got into it. So there's that. Plus they tend to build buildings of steel, which we like to do concrete, so that was another thing. So once you get past that it's a steel building and you deal with the organization, the OSHPD, it's kind of like a luxury hotel with medical gas and then some operating rooms. It's just good construction.

Adamson: So who sold that work, the hospital jobs?

Bramschreiber: We got the first one because Charlie was on the board at Arcadia, so I think he sold it that we should do it. When I went there I knew they were reluctant to let us do it, because we, quote, hadn't built a hospital. They had the prejudice that we

couldn't do it. Once we got going, it was fine. We exceeded their expectations and they got a good building.

So we did that, and three or four years later we did another bigger one at White Memorial Medical Center, and I ran that one also. That was actually a design/build hospital, which hasn't been done since or before, because OSHPD has a prejudice against that, too, because design/build, the architects were contracted through Pankow and they think that's the wrong way, it's a conflict of interest, so to speak. So they were prejudiced against that, even though there's checks and balances. So it's kind of a niche. I think now we want to kind of do one hospital at a time, if we can get the right one.

Adamson: The University of Hawaii Special Events Arena, was a project that both I've asked Dean Browning and Al Fink about. Talk about your role on that project and what you did and what was the significant innovations Pankow brought to that project.

Bramschreiber: That was our first kind of foray in a long time into government work. It was a design/build architectural competition through the state and built for the university. So it's government, which we kind of kind of wanted to stay away from for a while. So they had the competition, and by a loophole, actually, we won the competition. I could tell they actually didn't want us to win the competition; they wanted the other guys to win the competition. But they made a mistake in their RFP where they said if everybody's over the budget, the guy with the best price gets the job regardless of—they had this big point system for the design and for what you were getting. That's out the window; it's all about price after that. So we kind of lucked out and got it, which that part was good.

The innovation was the way we decided to do the structure. We did it out of precast, so we had thirty-two of these big kind-of-combination columns and beams. We called them bents. They each weighed like 120,000 pounds. We stacked them three high and twelve stacks around the building and next to that we stacked these big ring beams that connected them, thirty-two more of those. So it was a big erector set that we cast, and we erected in like less than two weeks. Actually, it was in all the newspapers and the TV, because it was kind of amazing. The [unclear] is the freeway. When we started doing this, everybody was like really slowing down to watch that. So they drive by this every day for years and there's nothing there, and then within two weeks there's this whole superstructure skeleton up there, which was the arena, out of nothing. Then we went from there.

My role there was basically kind of project superintendent, pretty much. Mike Liddiard was there, too, but his wife was dying, so he was kind of away most of the time, so I pretty much ran it with Jeff Doke and a couple of other people. Al was involved in the competition of getting the job, and so was Dean, but Dean the sponsor for a while, but I ended up buying most of the subs out myself after a while. So I got the subs and pretty much got it built. That was a very fun job, too, because I like sports and it was fun to build an arena. So that part was good.

Then Al and Dean got halfway through tied up in the next competition, which was this convention center, Hawaii Convention Center, which we ended up not getting. So they were kind of [unclear].

Adamson: As a superintendent, when it's a public sector job, are there elements of the job that are different than if it was a private sector job when it's actually being built?

Bramschreiber: Yes. The biggest thing was they wanted to add stuff to the arena. They didn't have no money, so they were trying to find a way to finagle different stuff in there so it didn't cost anything. We tried to accommodate them, give as much as we can give them, but there were very few extras possible. So there was a very small amount of extras that could be gotten. They had a budget and that was it.

I do remember, though, when they had a big ceremony to open the arena and then the governor spoke there and he made a comment like, he was lieutenant governor for eight years and he was governor for eight years, and this is the first project that actually got built on time and within budget since the whole time he was there. So he said that in front of like 10,000 people, so that was pretty good.

Adamson: From the state's point of view, I guess technically they're the owners, but who do you deal with, an official, or is there someone designated to be there?

Bramschreiber: It's run by what's called DAGS. It was the Department of Accounting and General Services. They had—I've forgot his name, but they had one guy who was our contact. He would come to the weekly meetings and just kind of listened in. He didn't really kind of ask for favors, if we could do it. If we could, we could, if not, we didn't. He would just monitor if—we were design/build, so making sure we're paying attention to the architect and not telling him he can't do stuff that we owe them. Just try

to make sure we do what the documents said. He was never a problem. We never really had any issues there.

Adamson: Is there typically an analog on private sector jobs where there's a representative of the owner?

Bramschreiber: Not nowadays, but back in the eighties and early nineties we just got the job and we built it, and once a month somebody would come out here to approve our billing and maybe give some design directions or whatever, and that was it. But then, unfortunately, in the middle nineties and up until now, every owner's got one or two construction managers that kind of want to get all they can, the extras for free, and they just want to squeeze in everything. So it's not as good as it was to me.

Adamson: If you just take the projects you worked on, can you talk about whether these projects got more complex and bigger over time?

Bramschreiber: Oh, hands down. I mean, not so much bigger, as far as square feet or how tall they were, how big they were, but they're incredibly more complicated. The structural building codes have gotten more severe. Hawaii was one level, it was like zone two and over here, and over here we're three, the highest one. So the structure here, that's why we can't do slipforms anymore because you can't get all the rebar in while you're going. You have to have it set, inspected. But all the MEP systems, the building management, the lighting controls, all the electronic systems, they were very rudimentary

in the eighties and now they're super elaborate, they're controlling electronic doors and all kinds of dampers and the ductwork. It's just a quantum leap in complexity. So that's been a huge difference. So it's way more complicated.

I think, roughly speaking, the designers and the consultants are weaker than they were twenty years ago. They do less, they take less pride and they do less. So to really build the building, it's more up to us to try to sit them down and figure it out and help them any way we can get it so we can build it, get them to finish their design.

Adamson: I've talked to several people who have mentioned that, including Alan Murk, Charlie Pankow believed that the superintendent was the crux, the critical, the linchpin on any project, that he wanted supervisors to know everything about a job, get in early with the scheduling and see to its execution. When you were superintendent on any job or several jobs, did you interact with Charlie on these jobs as superintendent?

Bramschreiber: Oh yeah, because he would always come by and check them out. What Alan said is true. The best one I've been on is where I got to be involved in the design/build job from the start, so I could be involved with design and kind of massage the structure with Bob Law's help, to fit our forming systems the best and get the right shapes and just have the background information from the start of everything that goes into it. Every job that I've been at, once I got there, I finished it. Some people just want to do the structure out of everything, but I believe it's important to be there from the start and then do the structure with the end in mind, kind of thing, you know. It's one thing just to build the structure, but you've got to build it so everything else fits with it. You

have all the conduits, all the duct shafts in the right spot, all the connections for precast and windows and skin and elevators, everything, is done right from the start. So it's built with the end in mind and you get to continue the process from start to finish. I think that's key.

If the job's going good, which I believe all mine have, you're allowed to just do it. You interact with Charlie or Alan Murk or whoever's the operations guy, Red Ward now. They come by periodically and check on a few things, check your costs and your safety record, how you're doing with the schedule. As long as things are fine, they leave you alone. So that part's great. That's why I like it so much, too; you are kind of in charge of your own destiny.

Adamson: Who determines who the Pankow professional team is on any given project? Does the superintendent have input on that, or do they put the team together, including the superintendent, and say, "This is your team"?

Bramschreiber: In most cases, you get a few choices. If they pick you to be there, then usually they talk to you and they say there's two or three choices of a project engineer and you can pick one from there. So you have some input. That part's good. For the lower people's benefit, they should work for different people, so I prefer to have different field engineers and different project engineers job to job, just so it goes good. Then they're exposed to different people and different ways of doing things. It's better for their career that way. So you have some input.

Adamson: When you went from Hawaii to the mainland and back, was that strictly governed by general market conditions or were there specific skills or something that they wanted you for?

Bramschreiber: Well, the first few times, me going to Hawaii was out of school, it was totally in the market to leave there. There was nowhere else—nothing to do in Hawaii. Probably could have stayed there, but I would have been bored and I wouldn't have gotten promoted, so I wanted to go to the Bay Area to get promoted. So that was market-driven. Then going from San Francisco down to L.A. was also market-driven. That's the move where there were a couple people that they also wanted to have move down, too, but they refused and they quit at that time, because they were scared of L.A. To go from L.A. to Hawaii, that was a tough one. That wasn't the market so much as the opportunity for me to become a superintendent, which I did. Dean Stephan wanted me to stay here and told me I was making a mistake to go there. Maybe he was right, I don't know. It doesn't matter. So that was not market; that was just an advance in my career.

Adamson: So it wasn't the case that you had Northern California, Southern California, and Hawaii sort of bidding for people or competing within the company for people on particular jobs?

Bramschreiber: I think sometimes. When I went back to Hawaii that time, yeah, that was kind of George Hutton and Dean Stephan both wanted me, so that was kind of competing for it. Back then, Hawaii was kind of autonomous, and I think George and

Dean both had Charlie's ear equally, so it was maybe sometimes an awkward situation between the two. Nowadays there's no problem there; it's more—

Adamson: One big thing.

Bramschreiber: Yeah.

Adamson: I probably should have asked you this a couple of minutes ago, but as a project superintendent, can you talk about how the project superintendent ensures the execution of design/build? How does it all come together? Not the slipforming, not the fly-forming, but the schedules and the budget and if the owner wants to change something. If you can refer to a specific case, that would be great. But if you can illustrate how you make sure that the execution of the project comes about.

Bramschreiber: Design/build, the design part is pretty much done before you start the project, because you have to design enough to get the permit to start the project. So you can help influence during the design while everything's being put together to make sure everything's coordinated the first time as much as possible and kind of done right. So you get the permit, you start, hit the ground running. Overall, a superintendent, you're [in charge of] the overall balancing of everything. You have the costs it needs to make the money; you have the schedule you have to finish on time or faster; and then you've got to get the quality that you owe for the contract documents. So you've got three things kind of—sometimes they work against each other, so you have to take the best fit. You

can go fast, but you might be spending more money than you're supposed to. You can go fast, but you might kind of skip on the quality. So you've got to fulfill all of your obligations and plus you have to make sure you do it safely. A big part of a superintendent is kind of you can step back and make sure you're keeping track of all the stuff, you've not getting carried away on one thing. So, to me that's the biggest key for it.

Adamson: Has there ever been something that came up in the middle of a project that was a curve ball, as they say, that could have resulted in a delay?

Bramschreiber: That happens all the time.

Adamson: I'm thinking Pearl Two, they found out the concrete on the lower floors were—I don't know if you know this already from Red [Metcalf].

Bramschreiber: Right.

Adamson: Yes, they had a problem with the concrete.

Bramschreiber: Well, under-strength.

Adamson: Under-strength, and they had to—

Bramschreiber: Take some out. That was before my time, actually. That's where they found out part of the way, like taking it out, they found out that the way the guy was doing the cylinder brace, actually, he wasn't testing it right. There's like a sulfur cap that goes on top that when you compressed it, how it makes it break. They were doing that wrong, too. So it might not have been as bad a problem as they thought it was.

The recent one I can think of is, White Memorial was a design/build hospital and the owner had the obligation to pick the medical equipment in a timely manner, because that affects everything from the structure on. So we can do the main structure, which you put these big things in like cath lab equipment or a big MRI machine. These things weigh twenty tons sometimes. It takes a lot of planning and structural support to do them. The owner wasn't capable of getting all the equipment picked and coordinated, so we ended up getting the OSHPD-permitted pieces to keep going and then we had to leave areas out while he was finishing that. It became a big dispute with the owner. It took mediation, arbitration at the end to get it done. We actually took over—he hired some equipment company and then another one and we actually took it over ourselves and coordinated it all ourselves and got it going. Between all that, we only lost like three months. We got a three-month extension for doing all that. The whole way through, the owner wouldn't admit any fault that he was responsible, but he obviously was. Big mediation and arbitration, and we basically won the majority of the case, but that was a huge curveball that we had to deal with.

Adamson: And arbitration was in the contract? That's how you do it?

Bramschreiber: First they had this thing called Project Neutral and then we had a more formal mediation. I think we actually made a deal in the formal mediation. But we kind of made a deal and had agreed to meet the schedule, the extended schedule that we thought we could do, which we did. Then because we met it, we were able to settle pretty favorably, where if we would have missed the schedule, then it would have been our fault more than the owner's fault.

So that was one of the more extreme examples of a curveball where you're supposed to get all the information to finish your design, get your permitting and keep going, but the third party, the owner itself, just fell down because he wasn't savvy about how to get the equipment.

Adamson: That sounds like a big one.

Bramschreiber: Yeah, that was a huge thing.

Adamson: This EIR in the case of Tyler Mall and they had to redo that, who paid for that then?

Bramschreiber: The owner, Donahue Schriber. Some other guy was building a mall in Moreno Valley and this was like direct competition, and he wanted—the Tyler Mall people, they were expanding, too, and they had lined up Nordstrom's, and the other guy really wanted the Nordstrom's store, so that's why he tried to challenge us and kill it so he could get the Nordstrom's store in Moreno Valley, but it didn't work out for him.

Adamson: You said you didn't come back to that project.

Bramschreiber: No.

Adamson: When the project got started, was that from the Pankow engineer's team point of view, was it all people who weren't scheduled initially or were some people able to come back?

Bramschreiber: Well, the overall guy, the sponsor, Norm Husk, he was—

Adamson: He was the same?

Bramschreiber: Yeah, he worked in the Altadena office. He just did something else for a while and then he came back and did that. It was all planned pretty good. Before I left, he bought out all the key subs or most of the key subs. So he had those employees. They had a good staff. They had Bill Hughes and Red Ward was there, so it worked out great.

Adamson: Any other examples to illustrate the point that come to mind?

Bramschreiber: Of big curveballs?

Adamson: I was reading in some [offsite managers'] meeting minutes about subs going belly-up in the middle of a project or two, or in the Pearl Two case. Just thinking of big things like that where just midstream something really potentially catastrophic happens, at least in terms of throwing the whole project off schedule or making it run over on costs.

Bramschreiber: Actually, the jobs I've been on, that was the only real example like that. The moderate stuff, you know, they don't pick finishes or pick a glass or something and it messes you up, but it's not a global thing.

Adamson: Most of the people that have worked in the field talk about you're training is basically on the job. Is that essentially how it's been in your case?

Bramschreiber: Totally my case. It was kind of figure it out and do it. I mean, you work with people, like Kim Lum helped train me a lot on Executive Centre. So that was good. Dick Walterhouse at Walnut Creek, for sure. But, yeah, they kind of throw you out there, which is what I wanted. I think it's the best way. I knew when I left Purdue that I wanted to work in the field and just have the hands-on experience. There's nothing like the pressure of a dozen guys standing around because you don't know where to put something, so you learn real fast to stay late, figure out for the next day, at least what you're doing, and get it out to the field and lay it out for them and show them what to do and keep going. So I think that part's great.

There's only so much you can train somebody on without doing it. If you've got some fancy computer program, you could read the manual and stuff, but until you start playing with it and doing it, you're not going to know how to do it. But nowadays a lot of the younger engineers, they want to have some kind of formal training, they feel they must have it. So I think the company is trying to provide more of that.

Adamson: So as project superintendent, then, do you have teaching moments where you are training the people?

Bramschreiber: Yeah, every day. We have these things called reader files, and I try to put everything in the reader file, if it's not too confidential. If it is, I black out stuff, but I want the young guys to read everything, read every contract, read the owner's contract, read any correspondence about things that are going bad or going good. That's a good way to learn.

A field engineer to me means field engineer, so they should be out in the field half the time at least. I like to talk to them out there as to what they're doing and go through stuff. So I think there's training throughout the day every day for the engineers, for sure.

Adamson: So this on-the-job training and managing people and projects, how would you characterize your style, management style? Or if someone was going to describe how you manage people, how do you think they would put it?

Bramschreiber: I would say, in kind of short verse, I don't want to give a big speech or give a big lecture, I want the person to do it themselves. I mean, if I tell you to do something, I don't want you to come back and ask me so many questions, why am I doing it for? I want you to take a stab at it, try your best to figure it out. I'll give you initial instructions, try your best, and then come see me and we'll go from there. But it's going to be all your work. So maybe I'm kind of gruff or whatever, but I do check in quite a bit with them and kind of oversee them until I have the confidence that they're doing it, and then I work on somebody else. So I don't know what style that is, direct supervision or something. Working with them on it, but they're taking the lead.

Adamson: Do you have interaction with the Special Projects people?

Bramschreiber: Almost never. I've never been on a Special Project. Some of the people I've helped train, they work in Special Projects now. No, I don't. I see what they do and it's different, it's a different way.

Adamson: What has been your favorite Pankow project that you've worked on, and why?

Bramschreiber: I've got to say the U.H. Arena. I got two choices, probably U.H. Arena, just because I like sports and it was fun. I was involved from the start and to see it all go together. We had a fun staff. It was in Hawaii. It didn't make the most money, but it was well managed and it was just a lot of fun.

Then my second choice would be probably the White Memorial Medical Center, because it was out-of-this-world challenging. It was real complicated with the [unclear] and the medical equipment. It was very challenging. To make the schedule we committed to, it was almost supernatural that we made it. Everything fit into place and down to the wire. We got it like one day before we were supposed to, so that was quite a feat. I was very proud of our staff on that one.

Adamson: That was quite recent?

Bramschreiber: Yeah, that was my last big job.

Adamson: When did that finish up?

Bramschreiber: It finished up in '06, March 22, '06, we got the [unclear] of completion. So to finish it and get OSHPD to sign off, which is difficult. In fact, the OSHPD guy told me that we were close, you know, so we called our inspectors, one of his bosses, because we couldn't get quite past the fire marshal. So we walked his boss around with the inspector record, the guy had been with us the whole time for the owner, and we convinced him that we should get it. He told his inspector onsite, you know, to give it to us and he said something like, "Now nobody can say that OSHPD didn't finish the project on time either," something like that. So that part was good, too. Because they have a reputation for just not caring when it finishes, just being severely bureaucratic, so we had to overcome that.

Adamson: You looked at these Pankow city murals. What is your favorite Pankow building? Most people say it's one they worked on, but do you have a favorite building that the company's done?

Bramschreiber: That the company's done?

Adamson: Yes.

Bramschreiber: My favorite building is Gateway Center, which I wasn't on at all, but it's got a gorgeous stone-clad tower and there's this big portal that goes down to Union Station. I'm little embarrassed that it's a government agency building that's kind of an artsy building, but it's just a gorgeous building. I think it's the best building we've ever built, Gateway Center, MTA Headquarters.

Adamson: Just generally speaking, what do you think makes Pankow a successful organization?

Bramschreiber: It's the people, obviously. It's the people with kind of this can-do culture, to try to do what you say you're going to do and do it right. Everyone asks, you know, if anybody were ever to cheat, cut corners or cheating the specs or do something unsafe. I think that's rare in the world. It's do it the right way, and it's just got a great group of people that stay with it a long time. So I think that's what makes it special and

why it works. I mean, it's construction. There's no secret, no secret ways of doing it, no secret formula or something. It's just good people and hard work, and doing it, doing it the right way and doing it safely.

Adamson: Speaking of no secrets, do you participate in the ACI [American Concrete Institute] or the Civil Engineers [ASCE] or some of these organizations and talk about the projects you've been on or contribute professionally to the field?

Bramschreiber: Not so much. I go to forums sometimes. It's more like roundtable discussions, or with the American General Contractors Association. I like that group. But I don't feel like, you know, Tom Verti became president of ACI or Joe's [Sanders] into that.

Adamson: What has changed most about the company since you've hired on?

Bramschreiber: I'd say it's gotten a little harder to do your job; it's gotten more bureaucratic. We're somewhat bigger. Now we have a whole human resources thing, bigger accounting. It's a little more unwieldy, less streamlined than it used to be. It's bigger, that's true. So there's good and bad.

Adamson: Now that Charlie's passed, you and other people in the firm, what are you doing to sustain the kind of company that he created? I'm thinking passing it on to people who didn't necessarily know Charlie, how do you keep that culture going?

Bramschreiber: I think the biggest thing is doing things right, not try to cheat or cut corners or risking people's lives or doing things not unsafe, just trying to do it, keep doing it the right way. I mean, it's got his name on it still. We need to live up to that Pankow legacy.

Adamson: You've worked at Pankow—

Bramschreiber: Twenty-eight years.

Adamson: —your whole career.

Bramschreiber: Right, except for a summer job in college.

Adamson: Do you still get a sense of what distinguishes Pankow as a construction company?

Bramschreiber: Yes, I think so.

Adamson: And what is that? How is Pankow perceived differently than a Webcor or a Swinerton or you throw out any number of companies, what is different?

Bramschreiber: Those two, we perform. We take it seriously and whatever we connect to, we do it. We finish the job on time. We do the right quality. There's two ways to approach it. You can be going through and you try to help the owner solve problems and keep going and do all you can to do that, or you can use the hiccups to your advantage to claim delays and get more general conditions and get more money, really gouge the owner. I believe we don't try to do that, and I think most people do.

I just had a meeting yesterday at White with Dave Eichten, White Memorial Medical Center, and there's like another package, another like a lobby and a chapel off of what we were doing that we designed, that we gave back the instruction because at that time we were too busy, but it got delayed till now. They've hired another contractor, Bernard's, and the owner mentioned today that they're unsafe, they don't respect—they have gates and that they don't man the gates, they don't respect people walking by, making noise in the hospital, making sure they don't run into somebody when they're running the site. Everything's an extra, too. You know, there's no favors, there's no working together at all. So he feels like they're being gouged, which is not what we did, and now he really appreciates that.

Adamson: That's a good example. What the governor of Hawaii mentioning was a good example.

Bramschreiber: Yes.

Adamson: Are there any other examples you have that—

Bramschreiber: And the OSHPD guy, too, saying the job got finished on time.

Everybody blames OSHPD, but it can be done. So that was good, too.

Adamson: So that's the kind of recognition you get from the outside of the kind of job that Pankow does.

Bramschreiber: Yeah, and pretty much every owner, with one exception, every owner that I've worked with, I'd say. The guys told me that, they really appreciate what we did.

Adamson: I know back in the Winmar days and the Pacific Telephone days, that repeat business was a mainstay of the company in the seventies and into the eighties. Are there any Winmars around anymore or is it pretty much you have to fight tooth and nail project-by-project to get jobs? Or do you have relationships with owners that more recently have resulted in successive projects?

Bramschreiber: Maybe. Kind of. I mean, like at White, the owner's construction manager's guy, Shane Miller Company, he brought us onboard for like the St. John's project, which are some pretty big renovations at St. Johns Hospital. So he recognized that. That's more a level above me as far as the repeat business. I'm not sure you can ever do like—I mean, in those days the people making the decision, they weren't really overseen. They didn't have to check prices. Like now everybody's got construction managers and they want to show what they're worth so they want to get multiple bids and

get everybody's margin down, and I think we've been lucky to still negotiate enough deals or enter design/build competitions or some way to have an edge besides just a straight hard bid. I doubt there will be another Winmar [where] you're thrown a job or two a year the way it is now. That would be great if there was.

Adamson: You've probably seen this video. Dick Walterhouse showed it to me when I went and interviewed him. It's called a training video or a culture video. But in it there's a couple minutes with Charlie Pankow talking about the company, and one of the quotes I pulled from there, and I think you've spoken to this, but I just pulled a quote out, he said at one point, "We don't rest on our laurels. If you're good, you'll find solutions." Can you use a project example to illustrate what that means to you, finding solutions on a project?

Bramschreiber: Yes, I think it's like White Memorial, the big design/build and the owner couldn't make the decision on the equipment, their side of it. Or one of our key subs, Salton Industries, who did all the plumbing and mechanical work as a designer, and they're longtime friends of the company at the highest levels. They were really insisting that this is going to end badly, we should just stop now and not proceed and just have the lawyers go at it. This is not the way Pankow does things, not the way Charlie would do it. You know, we're to keeping going and find a way to help the owner make a solution. It turned out we ended up pretty coordinating all the equipment and making the final deals to get it done. So it's to find a way to get it done, not an easy way to make money

on one project by screwing the owner. That's the reason I always have liked working for the company. It's the right way to do things.

Adamson: A few more questions about Charlie Pankow as a person. You mentioned this first encounter when you had a short interview with him. What were your first impressions at that time of Charlie Pankow. Even though you thought the encounter went badly, what were your impressions of him?

Branschreiber: He was intimidating. Throughout knowing him, he liked to ask these open-ended questions, like he'd always say, like, "What's new?" It could be anything, you know, so you had to think: What's new that would be important to Charlie? So you had to—he would ask what about this on the job you're doing. He'd ask you, "What's new?" So, stuff like that. It just took a little while to get to know him.

I felt really good when I knew he actually knew my name forever, which was like to 1985 in Walnut Creek I knew. Before I had the impression that whoever was giving the tour that he'd be telling him who he was talking to, the younger guys, right before he talked to them. But at that point I knew he knew my name, which was good. The more I got to know him, sporadically.

That safety story I told you, concern about safety, I think that was great. I remember, too, when we were doing the Paseo Colorado renovation in Pasadena, which is like his hometown, basically, and I think it was like Christmas 2000 and we were putting in this big shopping center and building apartments on top and it was just getting started and we had this big open space gutted out. He came by and he decided to throw

like a Christmas party for disadvantaged families in the area that he knew from some help organization. So he had us go buy Christmas trees, and then this organization then collected a bunch of presents and stuff and they were going to give them out to the families and give like food baskets and stuff. So he's promoting that, and then he came by the day before it was happening and he saw the presents and he thought they weren't good enough, so he told me to go to the store and just buy like 3,000 bucks of just nice presents to give to the families.

Then we actually had the Christmas party or whatever, and everybody got the presents. We had like six different Christmas trees there, and he said, "I want you to take these to people's homes." So he asked which families wanted trees. So we threw them in the back of my pickup truck, he didn't go with me, but, you know, we drove to these different people's houses and put these trees up in their living rooms. It was kind of a different side of him than I'd seen before. So I'll remember that always. Which year did he die? 2004 or '05??

Adamson: January of '04, I think.

Many people, Dean Stephan on down, mentioned how Charlie delegated authority and basically a hands-off approach, but at the same time he would show up on projects. I'm just wondering if this question makes sense. How do you think the firm reflected his personality?

Bramschreiber: Well, the delegating, that's definitely true of the superintendents. If they were doing the job, they were left alone, and they were, whatever, the CEO of that

jobsite. Some of the jobs you do are 150-million-dollar jobs, so it's a big responsibility. So I can see the delegating part. He would come by and spot check. He would come by when he was younger. He'd ask you certain costs that he cared about. Repetitive forming systems, he'd ask what your strip cost was and the fly-forms, the things that's a huge amount of your budget, and how you're doing on that. He'd check on that stuff. So I guess can see the delegating part. He encouraged that. What was the rest of the question?

Adamson: Charlie had a personality. How did it rub off on people, basically, and how did they sort of reflect Charlie's personality in conducting themselves, I guess, and how that permeated throughout the firm. You said if you knew Charlie Pankow, you sort of had an idea of what everyone else was like and the way they—

Bramschreiber: He delegated as much as possible. I remember when I worked at the main office, worked in Altadena a couple of times, it was like a year period and briefly then, he always used to come by, kind of walk around the office, like, four or five o'clock on Fridays, or he'd be there on Saturdays. He'd say, "What's new?" He'd talk to you. I think he was showing his work ethic. Construction sometimes is not a nine-to-five job. In between jobs, planning the stuff, okay, maybe it's nine to five or less, but when the job's going on, you work a lot of hours. I think he worked hard and he set that example to work hard.

From what I saw, like when he came to the field, he was pretty businesslike and he would tell you some brief jokes maybe sometimes, but it was about the business. He

wanted to really check up on how things were going. So I think he set that tone, businesslike and professionalism.

Adamson: If you're looking at the people, there's people like yourself, who were university graduates, who moved up to the superintendent, then there's other people like Al Murk or Red Metcalf or Red Ward, who came from the trades and rose up to be superintendents. If you look at the people who came to be superintendents, is there any design to who rose to that level? If you looked at the mix of people who came from the trades and who came from university, is it just the way it happened or did they try to encourage a mix, or how did that sort of develop?

Bramschreiber: I'm not sure they encouraged the mix. I think it was easier for the people from the university to move their way up, one level, the next, and the superintendent would be one of the levels. But the majority of those people don't want to stay superintendents; they want to do it once and then they want to go.

Adamson: Onward or upward.

Bramschreiber: What they think is upward. Like I said, the field can be frustrating. Some people don't want to deal every day with problems and difficult people, so they go past, whereas the trade guys, they would aspire to be superintendents and they would stay; they would stay superintendents. They would stay longer. It's rare for one of them to make it all the way up. So, yes, Red and Mike Liddiard and Red Ward, Red Metcalf,

Jack Greiger. And it's gotten more harder more recently, too, I think as the buildings have gotten more complicated. Now there's more stuff to do, too, as far as computer skills. The superintendent needs to be able to schedule, you know, scheduling software and do that. Not that those guys can't learn, but they're not as comfortable with it. Just recently, Frank Murphy got promoted from the trades up to be a superintendent. So he's been the first one that I can think of in a while. But those guys are all excellent superintendents, without a doubt.

Adamson: The last question that I have that you haven't spoken to, I think you've answered some of my questions before I've asked them.

Bramschreiber: Okay. Sorry.

Adamson: No, that's good that I don't have to ask. You answered them in the course of other questions. Some of those are restating things anyway. But if you look at just the legacy or the reputation of Charlie Pankow as an individual and then, by extension, the Pankow Company, if you were outside the company as an industry professional or someone who interacted with the company, what do you think, looking from the outside, people would point to in saying what Charlie Pankow and his company's contributions to the building industry, construction industry have been? What is Pankow known for from the outside?

Bramschreiber: I think just performing, I mean doing the job they say they're going to do, do it on time, do it without being sued by the owner or being in some kind of litigation, treating subs fairly, and just a good solid reputation across that way. Innovation, but that's hard to put a label on. It's a hard question.

Adamson: It's kind of a broad sweep. Is there any other anecdote or story that you have—it doesn't have to be on a project, it could be a Christmas party or an annual meeting—that illustrates the kind of person Charlie Pankow was, that you haven't already mentioned?

Bramschreiber: I was hired in 1981 and I went to Hawaii, and back then we used to have these annual meetings where everybody got together for like a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and that's where we did kind of our training. We had a lot of presentations on scheduling and new forming systems and interaction like that, and they had really first-class parties back then. So the first one I went to, I remember they had the all-day meetings and then—

Adamson: And where was this one?

Bramschreiber: It was in Pasadena, the old Huntington, Huntington Sheraton it was called back then, I think. Now it's the Ritz-Carlton, so a really fancy hotel. We were all waiting inside the ballroom and there's this kind smell, and we're, "What's that smell? What's that smell?"

Then we go in and there's like an Arabian Nights tent set up and there's like camels inside, some donkeys or whatever, and a lot of beautiful girls serving cocktails. I'm this guy from Chicago and I was like I've never seen such a thing. There's Charlie and Al Fink was there. Al Fink and Tom Verti ran that thing. So Al Fink was like this sheik, so he had on this headdress and stuff. He had his harem girls. So Charlie's like sitting on a camel, you know, with two girls and kind of posing. Then Al claps his hands and, I don't know if he knew it or not, but that was the signal for the camel to get up. So the camel got back and the two harem girls jumped off, but Charlie kind of came up, but he fell off the camel in front of my eyes. You know, there's the end of this party. [laughs] But he got back up and he just went on like nothing happened.

Adamson: It didn't faze him.

Bramschreiber: I thought that was great.

Adamson: I know several people have mentioned this, but at some point they stopped doing the three-day meeting. At what point was that?

Bramschreiber: Probably early nineties.

Adamson: And now what do they do?

Bramschreiber: Until then it was a big deal. Last year we did like almost nothing. They had a series of meetings with groups of people different places. Rik Kunnath came and talked to everybody. Just last Thursday we had—it wasn't everybody, but it was like all the partners and all the senior associates, so it was a hundred-and-some people that were from here and they flew them down to San Francisco, and the partners from Hawaii came over, too. We had a nice all-day meeting. Actually, Red Metcalf came down and so did Dean Stephan. So hopefully we'll do more like that where it's not company-wide, but at least you get together with more of the senior people.

So we did that and then they have it more in groups. They have like all the field engineers get together, so it's more formal, because they want more training. So it's formalized specific training. So it's like field engineers one, project engineers one, and the superintendents one. It's a different kind of meetings where they get everybody together. So instead of one big one, it's more of a specialized.

Adamson: That prompts a question that I didn't have on my list, but I've asked other people who were around at the time. You joined just before the reorganization in '85 or '86. Did that have an immediate impact on you, or what impact has that had on you in terms of the ownership piece of the reorganization?

Bramschreiber: That was actually perfect for me, because what happened, I was probably one or two years shy of being asked to join, so I got to join sooner, because it was being reorganized. But then it came from basically Charlie and George Hutton and Russ Osterman having like—I don't know the numbers, but 90 percent of the equity and

the earnings, to where it came to be where they had maybe 20 percent and from that more people got to share in that. So for me it was fabulous. It was a good time there. It's been great.

Adamson: So how does it work today? Has it changed over time as to who buys in or what people qualify? How does the ownership piece of that work?

Bramschreiber: It changed. So, '85, '86, it had it where it could be as many people as it took to keep coming in. You had so many shares and they would keep adding and adding. I think maybe they got up to like eighty people or something. I'm not sure of the numbers. But then about five years ago—I'm not an expert—there's some kind of tax laws or whatever where you couldn't do it that way anymore. It was a limited partnership and they had to have like thirty or so people max, so they redid it to thirty people and bought out the other fifty people who had smaller shares. And I was lucky enough to be one of those top thirty people, whatever. So now those thirty share in all the profits. So the first year it happened was so-so, and then the next year was very good. The last two years have been unprecedentedly successful.

Adamson: So for those other people there's what kind of program?

Bramschreiber: It's like profit-sharing and there's like matching 401K.

Adamson: The more traditional.

Bramschreiber: Yeah, stuff like that. The other people, I think it's like two or three million dollars a year of stuff they're getting. It's still generous. The partners, and I'm certainly not one of the key partners, with the highest stakes, but my stake is very much appreciated.

Adamson: So it had nothing to do with Charlie passing; it had to do with tax laws. The change that you said five years ago was coincidence with the fact that Charlie died five years ago, or did they change it?

Bramschreiber: I think that's what drove it, but that could have been. I know when Charlie died, that was a big amount to get out [unclear], but he still had a huge equity stake that had to go to his estate. So that had to get paid off too, and luckily, the times came out good where we had some banner years and we could do all that plus have record profits.

Adamson: I thank you for your time. I think I've run through my list. If there's anything you want to say about your career or experience at Pankow, you may, but I think you've pretty much covered it. Are there any projects on the list here that we didn't talk about specifically that there's something that stands out from the engineering or design/build aspect that—

Bramschreiber: The only one is the job I didn't like doing since I've been here, I'm not proud of, is Paseo Colorado. We did that one. That was the only owner I would call who was not really honest, I would say. It was TrizecHahn [the owner], big mall renovation, and the deal was made and what to do, and once again, they couldn't make decisions. There were apartments on top of this by their partner, Post Properties, apartments on top of what I was renovating. They were supposed to get their information so we could structurally build out below in a timely manner, and it didn't happen. There were super extreme delays throughout and they refused to move the end day. You just had to make it somehow.

Adamson: So you had to finish your—

Bramschreiber: We had to finish the retail and open it.

Adamson: So they could put the condos or apartments on top?

Bramschreiber: That—Post was separate. We had to get the podium ready so they could do it. The two levels of below-grade parking we had to redo and then change this closed, fortress-like mall into an open-air mall with different buildings with all different stores. They moved elevator shafts and escalators, just crazy things, and they wouldn't give any kind of extensions. The company directed me to finish it the best we could, no matter what, so that's what we did. We barely made it. The owner was just wrong in what he

did. So that bugged me. We finished actually like late September. It was like September 27th or something of 2001.

So one of those days was the 9/11/01, and we were meeting with the subs, you know, and we heard about this. We turned the TV on, and we just like supernaturally couldn't believe what was happening. Most of the subs went home that day; they didn't want to work. They weren't sure what was happening in the world. So I asked [unclear name] the owner, the guy I couldn't stand, "What do you want to do about this?"

He said, "I think we'll show the terrorists American resolve if we finish the mall over on time."

So I kind was like, "Okay." [laughs] "Thank you very much." So that's what we did. So that kinds of stands out as a job where I felt I worked with an unfair owner. He took advantage of us, which you don't like to have happen.

Adamson: Right. And if you don't finish on time, there's a financial hit.

Bramschreiber: Oh yeah. There was huge [unclear] damage if this didn't get done, just incredibly huge. But we had all kinds of documentation on why. We probably would have won the claim, but then we lose one of our signs of pride of never in a big dispute with an owner, being sued by an owner. So we avoided all that.

Adamson: So you finished it sufficiently to his satisfaction? They didn't come back later and say, "Well, you didn't—."

Bramschreiber: No, they tried that, but it opened the day it was supposed to.

Adamson: It did. Okay.

Bramschreiber: There was a big grand opening when it was supposed to.

Adamson: Very good. I thank you for your time.

Bramschreiber: All right.

[End of interview]